DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 139 223 EC 100 798

AUTHOR Coonley, Patrick G.; Coonley, Carol Sue
TITLE The Personality Characteristics of Male Educable Mentally Retarded Students Successful and Unsuccessful at Employment.
PUB DATE Apr 77
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at The Annual International Convention, The Council for Exceptional Children (55th, Atlanta, Georgia, April 11-15, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educable Mentally Handicapped; *Employment; Males; Mentally Handicapped; Personality; *Personality Assessment; Post Secondary Education; *Success Factors; *Vocational Adjustment

ABSTRACT

The personality characteristics of 50 successfully employed and 50 unsuccessfully employed mildly retarded males (15-19 years old) were evaluated. Analyses of scores on the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, FORM E, indicated that the successfully employed Ss were more practical than imaginative, more tough-minded than tender-minded, and more shrewd than forthright. Findings had implications for counseling educable retarded workstudy students. (CL

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ED139223

THE PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF MALE EDUCABLE MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL AT EMPLOYMENT

A Paper Presented to
The National Convention of
The Council For Exceptional Children
in
Atlanta, Georgia
April 15, 1977

by

Patrick G. Coonley Ed. D.
Associate Professor of Special Education
Central Missouri State Univeristy
Warrensburg, Missouri 64093

and

Carol Sue Coonley Ed. S.
Special Education Teacher
Warrensburg Junior High School
Warrensburg, Missouri 64093

EC 100798

THE PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF MALE
EDUCABLE MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS
SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL AT EMPLOYMENT

Although personality is often the factor which brings the educable retardate to the attention of the educational, legal and mental health professions, personality evaluations have had low priority in professional work with the retarded. From the very beginning of the study of occupational success or failure of the educable mentally retarded, personality characteristics have emerged as an important, if not crucial, factors (Jordan, 1972).

With the recent development of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, Form E (16 PF, Form E), both readability and comprehension levels are within the ability range of the educable mentally retarded which allows for an objective measure of personality characteristics.

PROBLEM. This study was designed to determine if (1) the 16 PF, Form E would differentiate between the educable mentally retarded students successful at employment (S) and those unsuccessful at employment (U) both groups enrolled in a special education workstudy program, and (2) which of the sixteen factors might contribute to the prediction of success or failure at employment

PROCEDURE. The subjects were 100 educable mentally retarded meles enrolled in special education classes and engaged in workstudy programs in six cities of the State of Missouri. Two samples were used: Fifty students successfully employed in the competitive labor market (continuous employment for six months) formed the S group. Fifty students, placed in competitive employment and returned to the special education classroom by employer request, formed the U group. Only male

TABLE 1

Chronological Age and Intelligence Quotient Data

	Wechsler IQ Data			Chronological Age		
	Range	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD
S Group	48-78	68.52	6.69	16-19	16.90	0.91
U Group	46-80	67.98	8.15	16-18	17.00	0.81

students were used because of the small number of females in the workstudy programs. Furthermore, Porter, Collins and McIver (1965) have indicated that sex differences are significant in differentiating the personality characteristics among the educable mentally retarded. The selected school districts provided subject representation from various socioeconomic classes as well as urban, suburban and rural occupational settings. In May of 1975, the taped version of the 16 PF, Form E was presented to the 100 subjects who met the selection criteria.

RESULTS. The F test (Guilford, 1964, p. 270) indicated statistical significance (obtained F value 2.80 with a required F value of 2.17) at the .01 level of confidence allowing for the rejection of the hypothesis that there would be no personality differences between educable mentally retarded males successful and unsuccessful at employment as measured by the 16 PF, Form E.

Although the F test does allow for the inference that differences beyond chance occurred in personality variables of the S and U groups, it does not specify which of the sixteen factors have significance. The *t* tests were used for that purpose (Table 2).

The *t* test for the difference between means (Guilford, 1965, p. 184) indicated the S group was superior to the U group at the .05 level in being more practical than imaginative, at the .10 level in being more tough-minded than tender-minded, and more shrewd than forthright.

Although all other personality factors were not statistically significant, the S group was describe in generally more flattering terms: reserved, bright, emotional, humble, happy-go-lucky, conscientious, trusting, apprehensive, experimental, undisciplined and relaxed. The U group, by comparison, was described in less generous terms: outgoing, dull, stable, assertive, sober, expedient, suspicious, placid, conservative and tense.

TABLE 2

The *t* Tests for the Differences between Means

Variable Factor	Successful Group	Unsuccessful Group	*t* value	Personality Factor Range
1	M = 3.6400	M = 3.9600	-0.7272	+Outgoing
A	SD 2.0678	SD 2.0499	ns	-Reserved
2	M = 4.4200	M = 4.2400	+0.5962	+Bright
B	SD 1.5130	SD 1.5059	ns	-Dull
3	M = 4.0400	M = 4.1200	-0.2663	+Stable
C	SD 1.6777	SD 1.3036	ns	-Emotional
4	M = 3.5000	M = 3.6000	-0.2817	+Assertive
E	SD 1.7291	SD 1.8182	ns	-Humble
5	M = 4.6800	M = 4.5400	+0.3818	+Happy-go-lucky
F	SD 1.9213	SD 1.7404	ns	-Sober
6	M = 4.7200	M = 4.6400	+0.2486	+Conscientious
G	SD 1.5258	SD 1.6874	ns	-Expedient
7	M = 3.2000	M = 3.2000	0.0000	+Venturesome
H	SD 1.7728	SD 1.8952	ns	-Shy
8	M = 2.3800	M = 2.9200	-1.4210	+Tender-minded
I	SD 1.8282	SD 1.9778	.10***	-Tough-minded
9	M = 3.7600	M = 4.0800	-0.9732	+Suspicious
L	SD 1.5460	SD 1.7360	ns	-Trusting
10	M = 3.1400	M = 3.5800	-1.6903	+Imaginative
M	SD 1.2123	SD 1.3863	.05**	-Practical
11	M = 4.2800	M = 3.9600	+1.3013	+Shrewd
N	SD 1.2296	SD 1.2282	.10***	-Forthright
12	M = 4.7200	M = 4.5600	+0.4682	+Apprehensive
O	SD 1.6418	SD 1.7746	ns	-Placcid
13	M = 3.9000	M = 3.6800	+0.7253	+Experimental
Q1	SD 1.6812	SD 1.3315	ns	-Conservative
14	M = 4.2200	M = 4.2200	0.0000	+Self-Sufficient
Q2	SD 1.7177	SD 2.0631	ns	-Group Dependent
15	M = 4.4400	M = 4.7200	-0.9079	+Controlled
Q3	SD 1.6182	SD 1.4574	ns	-Undisciplined
16	M = 3.4400	M = 3.5200	-0.2030	+Tense
Q4	SD 1.9076	SD 2.0327	ns	-Relaxed

* is *t* of 2.3264 = .01 level.
** is *t* of 1.6448 = .05 level..
*** is *t* of 1.2815 = .10 level.

CONCLUSIONS. While the standard limitations of small sample size, randomness of the sample, etc., greatly restrict the generalization of the findings, some rather intriguing conclusions may be offered for consideration. A careful study of the terms and concepts used to describe the personality traits of the successfully employed EMR student (practical, tough-minded, and shrewd) appear appropriate for the unskilled and semiskilled employment available to the EMR male, however, the same terms appear to be less appealing to the classroom teacher and the educational institution. Youngsters expressing imagination, tender-minded concern, and forthrightness appear to be more readily accepted in the school setting.

Although much more research is needed to explore the personality dimensions of the EMR youngster who is practical, tough-minded, and shrewed, it appears that the school should resist the temptation to expel, suspend, push out or allow these students to drop out of school. Rather, the teacher ought to provide some insulation from punitive action from institutions until the youngster is allowed to take on his occupational responsibilities.

The implications for the education of the imaginative, tender-minded, and forthright youngster is even less clear. Educators would hesitate to recommend that these youngsters be taught to be machiavellians, yet such personality characteristics are apparently in conflict with job success. Use of the 16 PF, Form E is suggested to predict difficult job adjustment and to alert professionals to initiate counseling supervision for the EMR workstudy student.

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